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28 April 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Thoughts from Conversation with Herman Wouk, 25 April 1980

1. The Butch Williams affair--Iran rescue attempt--are signs of a deep malaise.

2. The United States has not degenerated irretrievably.

3. The basic problem is the public attitude or indifference--largely post-Vietnam.

4. The problem is not finding a scapegoat or cause of the failure in the Iranian desert; it is going back more deeply to climate and attitudes that let this kind of performance develop.

5. This probably shows that a volunteer force is not adequate--likely because of the severance of connection between the American populace and its military.

> Universal training is an attractive alternative. It could be based on the concept that if you expect Social Security retirement and government care when you are elderly, you have to qualify by putting in some service when you are young.
>
> That service could be of the individual's choice--hospital care, garbage collection, CCC, or military. You would be underpaid because you would be providing a service; yet you would be working alongside others who would be getting more normal pay. This might well lead people to go into the fields. Those that would be made available would be fields in which there were shortages of applicants in the country and hence this might solve the problems.

6. What may be needed is a special commission to look at what the meaning of the Iranian fiasco is for our overall welfare--a commission of businessmen and people from the arts. I thought it should be unclassified and talk mainly to people not in the government. Herman thought it would have to have clout, classified access and the opportunity to talk to people who were in the government.

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7. Herman pointed out a problem like this has a potential corrective. We've got to be sure we find that corrective in this case.

STANSFIELD TURNER

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